

**Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission  
Research, Development & Evaluation Department**



**Facts about Persons with Disabilities**

**September, 2006**

This fact sheet reports on income and employment gaps between people with and without disabilities between the years 2003 and 2004.

The estimates are taken from the 2004 Disability Status Reports of the American Community Survey— a survey of the U.S. Census Bureau designed to replace the decennial census long form.

This information was reported by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics at Cornell University.

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**Prevalence**

- The percentage of working age individuals reporting a disability increased from 12.0 percent to 12.1 percent in 2004, in the US.
- In 2004, 20,268,000 of the 167,902,000 working age individuals reported one or more disabilities, as compared to 19,898,000 of the 165,836,000 working age individuals in 2003, in the US.
- The disability with the largest percentage point increase was “mental disabilities” increasing from 4.0 percent to 4.2 percent.

**Employment**

- The employment rate of working age people with disabilities decreased from 37.9 percent in 2003 to 37.5 percent in 2004, in the US.
- The employment rate for people without disabilities increased from 77.6 percent in 2003 to 77.8 percent in 2004.
- The gap between employment rates of those with and without disabilities increased from 39.7 percent to 40.3 percent in 2004.

### **Full-Time/ Full-Year Employment**

- The percentage of working age people with disabilities working fulltime / full year decreased from 23% in 2003 to 22.4 % in 2004, in the US.
- The percentage of working-age people without disabilities decreased from 56.4 percent in 2003 to 56.2 percent in 2004.

### **Annual Labor Earnings**

- The median annual labor earnings of working age people with disabilities working full-time/full-year were unchanged at \$30,000 in 2004.
- The median difference in labor earnings between people with and without disabilities was unchanged from 2003 at \$5,000 in 2004.

### **Annual Household Income**

- The median household income of working-age people with disabilities increased from \$34,200 in 2003 to \$34,300 in 2004.
- The median household income for people without disabilities increased from \$58,400 in 2003 to \$60,000 in 2004.
- The difference in median household income between working-age people with and without disabilities increased from \$24,200 in 2003 to \$25,700 in 2004.

### **Poverty Rate**

- The poverty rate of working age people with disabilities increased from 23.3 percent in 2003 to 24.1 percent in 2004.
- The poverty rate if working-age people without disabilities increased from 8.9 percent in 2003 to 9.1 percent in 2004.
- The difference in the poverty rate between people with and without disabilities increased from 14.4 percentage points in 2003 to 15 percentage points in 2004.

### **Supplemental Security Income**

- The percentage of working-age people with disabilities receiving SSI payments decreased from 15.5 percent in 2003 to 15.4 percent in 2004, in the US.
- The number of working-age people with disabilities receiving Supplemental Security Income payments increased from 3,090,052 in 2003 to 3,117,960 in 2004.

### **Housing**

- The percentage of people with disabilities living in owner occupied housing decreased from 63.7 percent in 2003 to 63.4 percent in 2004, in the US.
- The percentage of working age people without disabilities living in owner occupied housing increased from 69.5 percent to 69.9 percent.
- The difference in the percentage of people with and without disabilities living in owner occupied housing increased from 5.7 percent to 6.5 percent in 2004.

### **Activity Limitation – Employment**

- The percentage of working age people with sensory, physical, and/or mental disabilities that report an employment disability increased from 53.2 percent in 2003 to 54.2 percent in 2004, in the US.
- The percentage of working-age people with a sensory disability that reported an employment disability increased from 38.8 percent to 40.4 percent in 2004.
- The percentage of working-age people with a physical disability that reported an employment disability increased from 62.6 percent to 63.6 percent in 2004.
- The percentage of working-age people with a mental disability that reported an employment disability decreased from 68.3 percent to 68.2 percent in 2004.

### **Age Distribution**

Among people with disabilities, the age distribution in 2004 was:

- ages 21-29 10.6 percent
- ages 30-39 15.1 percent
- ages 40-49 26.4 percent
- ages 50-59 31.9 percent
- ages 60-64 16.0 percent

In comparison, the age distribution among people without disabilities in 2004 was:

- ages 21-29 21.8 percent
- ages 30-39 25.4 percent
- ages 40-49 26.7 percent
- ages 50-59 19.7 percent
- ages 60-64 6.3 percent

### **Race Distribution**

- Among people with disabilities, the percentage of non-white people increased from 25.4 percent in 2003 to 25.8 percent in 2004.

### **Gender Distribution**

- Among people with disabilities, the percentage of women increased from 51.2 percent in 2003 to 51.6 percent in 2004.

### **Education Distribution**

Among working-age people with disabilities, in 2004 the percentage with

- Less than a high school degree was 25.4%
- A high school diploma/equivalent was 33.7%
- Some college was 28.1%
- A Bachelor's degree or more was 12.7%

In comparison, among working-age people without disabilities the percentage in 2004 with

- Less than a high school degree was 11.8%
- A high school diploma/equivalent was 28.1%
- Some college was 30.3%
- A Bachelor's degree or more was 29.8%

### **Across New England**

- Between 2003 and 2004 the percentage of working-age people with disabilities in Massachusetts increased from 9.9 percent to 10 percent.
- During the same period the percentage of working-age people with disabilities in Massachusetts who were employed decreased from 36.3 percent to 35.4 percent.
- The percentage of working-age people without disabilities employed in Massachusetts increased from 79.9 percent to 81.2 percent.
- Between 2003 and 2004 the percentage of working-age people with disabilities employed in Connecticut has increased from 42.8 percent to 43.6 percent.
- The percentage of working-age people with disabilities employed in New Hampshire decreased from 46.4 percent in 2003 to 41.8 percent in 2004.
- Vermont experienced the largest percentage point gain in the employment rate of working age people with disabilities – from 46.9 percent to 50.8 between 2003 and 2004.